

Message Text

SECRET

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 ACDA-05 SAM-01 EA-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 ARA-06 /099 W

----- 063729

O P 281050Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7514

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

S E C R E T RABAT 0434

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG UR

SUBJECT: SOVIETS SEEK TO PLACATE GOM, DOWNPLAY SAHARA ROLE

1. DCM CALLED ON MFA DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN
AFFAIRS BELKORA AFTERNOON JAN. 27. BELKORA HAD JUST RECEIVED

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SOVIET AMBASSADOR GORUNOV.

2. BELKORA SAID TWO HAD HAD LONG DISCUSSION ON DOWNED MOROCCAN F-5. GORUNOV DID NOT DENY THAT SOVIET WEAPONS HAD BEEN USED AND THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION USED TERM "SA-6". NEITHER GORUNOV NOR BELKORA HAD EVEN MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF SA-7. GORUNOV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SA-6 COMPLICATED WEAPON WITH WHICH POLISARIO UNLIKELY TO BE FAMILIAR. HE TOLD BELKORA HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO HIS GOVERNMENT THAT ALGERIA BE REMINDED OF TRANSFER CONDITIONS, WHICH PROVIDED THAT WEAPONS BE USED ONLY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES.

3. GORUNOV ALSO DENIED THAT SOVIETS HAD ANY DESIGNS ON OBTAINING BASE IN MERS EL KEBIR OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN NORTH AFRICA, BELKORA SAID. SOVIET WENT ON TO MAKE SHARP DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOVIET INTERESTS IN NORTH AFRICA AND ANGOLA. IN LATTER CASE SOVIETS INTERESTED IN ASSISTING END OF COLONIALISM AND SUPPORTING GROUP WHICH REPRESENTED ANGOLAN PEOPLE, AS ENDORSED BY OAU (SIC). POLISARIO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, HE SAID; AND THERE WERE NO SIMILARITIES AT ALL BETWEEN SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD POLISARIO AND ATTITUDE TOWARD MPLA. HE SAID SOVIET POLICY IN NORTH AFRICA IS TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH EVERYBODY.

4. GORUNOV ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WERE SOVIET TECHNICIANS IN ALGERIA, BUT SAID HE "DOESN'T THINK" THERE ANY CUBANS. DISMISSED VIETNAMESE PRESENCE BY ASKING RHETORICALLY WHAT GIAP, WHO "DOESN'T UNDERSTAND" SAHARA, COULD DO ABOUT IT ANYWAY. HE SAID IT ONLY NATURAL THAT GIAP HAD GONE TO ALGIERS INSTEAD OF RABAT, FOR RABAT HAD RECOGNIZED SAIGON UP TO END. IN ANY CASE, VIETNAMESE POSED NO SERIOUS THREAT.

5. COMMENT: SOVIETS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE OF RECENT TRENDS IN KING'S THINKING AND DEMARCHE SEEMS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO COUNTER KING'S RECENT ASSERTIONS OF LINKAGE BETWEEN SOVIET POLICIES IN ANGOLA AND SAHARA, AS WELL AS TO STEM GENERAL TREND TOWARD WORSENING RELATIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND USSR. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH SOVIET POSTURE HERE TO DATE, MOST RECENTLY DISPLAYED IN THEIR EXTREMELY RESTRAINED PUBLIC REACTION TO GOM'S JANUARY SEIZURE OF A SOVIET TRAWLER UNDER SUSPICION OF ENGAGING IN SAHARA-RELATED MISCHIEF.

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6. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT MIDDLE-RANKING BELKORA WAS TAGGED TO RECEIVE SOVIET AMBASSADOR RATHER THAN HIGHER-RANKING OFFICIAL, AS ANOTHER GESTURE OF GOM PIQUE WITH RUSSIANS.

7. WE CONTINUE TO QUESTION WHETHER MISSILE WHICH DOWNED F-5 WAS A SAM-6, AND WE HAVE HAD RECENT INDICATION FROM KNOWLEDGEABLE MOROCCAN MILITARY SOURCE THAT MISSILE WAS A SAM-7. IN ANY CASE, GORUNOV'S

REFERENCES TO SAM-6 NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE,
AND HE MAY HAVE SIMPLY GONE ALONG WITH BELKORA ON THAT POINT
TO AVOID DEBATE.
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